
Health Care

How Can We Decrease Childhood Overweight in Utah?

In 2006, Governor Jon M. Huntsman, Jr. released the *Utah Blueprint to Promote Healthy Weight in Children, Youth, and Adults*. The goal and objectives below are taken from that document. The document is available at <http://www.health.utah.gov/obesity/docs/obesityblueprint.pdf>.

GOAL: Utah's health care providers and health insurance administrators will assume an active role in addressing childhood overweight.

Objective 1: Increase the proportion of health care providers who routinely monitor, track, and inform patients and/or parents of body mass index (BMI), weight gain, and/or growth.

- Understand the use of BMI as a screening tool.
- Identify barriers to implementation of practice recommendations and policies to support obesity prevention and control.
- Include BMI screening and obesity preventive services as part of clinical practice guidelines and quality assessment measures.



Objective 2: Increase insurer and accrediting organization support of clinical measurement and counseling related to BMI.

- Work with insurers and employers to identify, prioritize, and evaluate insurance coverage by public and private payers for behavioral, nutritional, medical, and surgical treatment of overweight and obesity.

Objective 3: Increase provider understanding of BMI and awareness of the importance of BMI as a clinical indicator of health.

- Use evidence-based counseling and guidance to promote healthy weight and prevent overweight and obesity.
- Provide education regarding the benefits of preconception healthy weight.

Objective 4: Increase the proportion of persons who are told by their health care providers about the health risks and diseases associated with overweight and obesity.

- Present and discuss the health risks associated with overweight and obesity in sensitive and culturally-appropriate language to patients.

Objective 5: Increase the proportion of health care providers who routinely refer patients to community resources.

- Develop an inventory of existing evidence-based community resources related to overweight, obesity, physical activity, and nutrition.
 - Refer patients to the above resources and solicit patient feedback.
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Objective 6: Improve clinical practice guidelines related to overweight, obesity, physical activity, and nutrition services.

- Identify and share obesity-related clinical best practices.
- Develop training programs for medical and allied health professionals to improve their knowledge and counseling skills related to nutrition, physical activity, and other life behaviors related to obesity prevention.
- Increase medical and allied health care provider awareness of higher risk periods during the lifecycle for excessive weight gain and the development of overweight or obesity.
- Provide reimbursement for clinical treatment of obesity by a multidisciplinary team.
- Reimburse for community or hospital-based prevention courses geared toward the family.

Objective 7: Increase the proportion of health care providers who advocate for policy and environmental changes that support healthy eating and physical activity in schools, worksites, communities, and campuses.

- Attend local school board, city council, Chamber of Commerce, and legislative meetings to advocate for policy and environmental changes.

Examples of Success

The Association for Utah Community Health (AUCH): AUCH has established partnerships with Community Health Centers (CHC) across Utah to increase physical activity and improve nutrition for clients. These services are focused on underserved populations.

Located at <http://www.auch.org>.

Intermountain Health Care (IHC) Obesity Care Process Model (CPM): IHC developed and implemented a CPM to summarize and promote the best clinical care for obese patients. To support the Obesity CPM, IHC reimburses for some obesity-related services and procedures.

Deseret Mutual Benefit Administration (DMBA): DMBA provides employee insurance for employees of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They offer a wellness program, *Living Healthy*, for DMBA members. Located at <http://dmba.com>.

Public Employees Health Program (PEHP)/Healthy Utah: PEHP, the organization providing health coverage to many Utah state employees, provides resources and support to *Healthy Utah*, a comprehensive employee wellness program. Located at <http://www.healthyutah.org>.

Utah Partnership for Healthy Weight: The Utah Partnership for Healthy Weight is comprised of representatives from the public and private sectors and is focused on implementing activities to achieve healthy weight in Utah. Health systems are represented through insurers and medical providers.

References:

Bureau of Health Promotion. Tipping the Scales Toward a Healthier Population in Utah. Salt Lake City: Utah Department of Health 2005. Pages 17-21. Located at <http://health.utah.gov/obesity>.
Institutes of Medicine of the National Academies. Fact Sheet. Preventing Childhood Obesity: The Role of the Health-Care Sector and Providers. Retrieved on April 25, 2006 from <http://www.iom.edu/CMS/22593.aspx>.

Resources:

Obesity in Utah Web site. Located at www.health.utah.gov/obesity.
Healthy Utah Web site. Located at <http://www.healthyutah.org>.
